

Stockton University
Honors Program Review
Spring 2023

Submitted by:
Kevin W. Dean, PhD
Founding Director and Chair – Honors College
West Chester University of PA

Honors Program Review Report

I. Process of the Review

Dr. Kevin W. Dean, Founding Director and Chair of the Honors College at West Chester University of Pennsylvania was invited to conduct a review of the Honors Program at Stockton University by Dr. Joshua (Josh) Duntley, Director of the Stockton University Honors Program. Dr. Dean requested, received, and reviewed multiple documents pertaining to Stockton's program, including a) 2021-22 Annual Report, b) 2015 academic review, c) Stockton University's current Strategic Plan, d) nomination document for Honors Faculty designation, e) rubric and guidelines for honors course proposals, f) structure and governance of the student executive board.

In his 25th year leading WCU's Honors College, for nearly two decades Dean has also served as convener for the 14 honors programs in the Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education (PASSHE) and holds active membership in the National Collegiate Honors Council (NCHC) where for the past decade he has served as co-chair of the International Education Division. Author of multiple articles highlighting best practices in honors, he has presented in numerous national and international conferences. A former *Kellogg Leadership Fellow*, during his 32 years at WCU he has consistently received teaching accolades, including the *Lindback Distinguished Teaching Award*, and has served as advisor to both the Honors Student Association (a robust organization with nearly 300 members) and *Omicron Delta Kappa*, the national honorary for scholarship, leadership, and service.

Between February 20 and 24, Dr. Dean conducted zoom interviews with the following administrator, faculty, and student stakeholders in honors. The conversation with these individuals provides illustrations and support to print documentation reviewed prior to the conversations. Dr. Duntley dedicated personal time in contacting each participant, scheduling interview time slots, and coordinating the connections for all zoom calls.

- Dr. Josh Duntley, Director Stockton Honors Program
- Dr. Robert Gregg, Dean of General Studies
- Dr. Jessica O'Shaughnessy, Associate Provost
- Dr. Deeanna Button, Chair – Undergraduate Criminal Justice Program
- Dr. Christine Tartaro, Chair – Masters in Criminal Justice & Honors Council Member
- Dr. Steve Radwanski, Assistant VP – Student Living & Learning
- Mr. Donald Hudson, Sr. VP – Facilities & Operations
- Mr. John Fritsch, Assistant VP – Facilities & Plant Operations
- Ms. Rhianon Lepree, Director – Facilities Administration
- Dr. Merydawilda Colon, Exec. Director – Stockton Center for Community Engagement & Service Learning
- Dr. Alaina Walton, Director of Assessment
- Dr. Robert Heinrich, VP – Enrollment Management
- Dr. Tina Zappile, Lead Negotiator - SFT
- Dr. Tara Crowell – Health – Honors Council
- Mr. Eddie Horan – Writing Center – Honors Council & Alumni

- Dr. Audrey Latourette – Business Law – Honors Council
- Dr. Robert (Bob) Olsen – Chemistry – Honors Council
- Dr. Michael Rodriguez – Political Science - Honors Council
- Dr. Mark Sullivan – Biology – Honors Council
- Mr. Richard Trama – Guidance – Honors Council
- Dr. Manish Madan – Criminal Justice – Honors Council & President – Faculty Senate
- Dr. Margaret Lewis – Biology – Honors Council
- Dr. Katie Yang – Psychology – Honors Council
- Katie Beetel – Senior - Health – Co-Student Exec. Director
- Riya Goyal – Junior - Computer Science & Mathematics – Co-Student Exec. Director
- Connor Williams – First Year - Physics – First Year - Co-Director Community Service – Student Exec
- Nashwa Hanif – Sophomore - Biology – Co-Director Community Service – Student Exec.
- Christina Caruso – Sophomore - Biology – Director – Social Media – Student Exec.
- Brooke Peterson – Junior - Biology-Ecology – Co-Director – Events – Student Exec.
- Tanisha Sharma – Sophomore - Biology – Director – Fundraising & Finance – Student Exec.

II. Strengths of the Stockton University Honors Program

The Honors Program at Stockton continues to exhibit many strengths and has reason for pride in multiple areas. The list below is particularly strong and aligns with the National Collegiate Honors Council (NCHC) program review instrument. Not only is each of these areas a strength but they demonstrate enhancement since the 2015 review.

- 1) As **Program Director**, Dr. Josh Duntley provides truly outstanding dedication and leadership. Every person I spoke with expressed appreciation and gratitude for his devotion to the program and his affable interpersonal/relational skills. From conversations with him throughout the review process and the vast amount of background material he presented me, Dr. Duntley has chosen to invest time and m-energy into this program. Far more than a place holder director or viewing this position as a steppingstone to higher administrative positions, Dr. Duntley demonstrates a deep commitment to his colleagues, the institution, and most definitely the students, to do all he can to make honors as vibrant a program as he can.
- 2) The **honors faculty** demonstrate genuine passion for honors and joy in their teaching experiences. They represent a wide range of academic disciplines (NCHC 6.4) that reflect the wide range of student academic interests. Their collaborative spirit is most impressive. The faculty also garner consistent testimonial praise from honors students who remark how they often go beyond what other professors do to engage them. One student said, “I love my honors professor. More than requiring me to learn lists of information, she really challenges makes me think.” Others shared how the ideas and topics covered in honors classes did not stay in the room when class ended but rather stayed with them and became ideas and reflections they shared with peers, both inside and outside of honors. The students recognize the stellar quality of the faculty. At the Awards Dinner on April 26, two of the three professors named “top” at Stockton included two honors professors, Eddie Horan and Christine Tartaro.
- 3) The **honors students** demonstrate dedication to honors as evidenced by the time they dedicate to the co-curricular operations linked with the honors program and an appreciation for their opportunities for leadership development that comes through honors classes and co-curricular experiences.
- 4) The **interdisciplinarity of the honors curriculum** affords honors the ability to celebrate diversity by providing a meaningful experience for students from literally every academic interest. Far more than defining honors as “harder for harder’s sake” and running the honors curriculum akin to Advance Placement courses that purportedly dig deeper into a specific disciplinary topic, Stockton’s honors

curriculum prioritizes broad based critical thinking. The curriculum reinforces the high impact practice of creating a living-learning community. Through honors courses, academically gifted students from diverse intellectual backgrounds explore the breadth of academic topics and engage in conversations to see how multiple perspectives illuminate them, such as ethical decision making, sustainability, globalization, and citizenship. In short, the Stockton honors curriculum prepares students for more than vocational success but life success.

- 5) The **prioritization of service** permeates Stockton's honors program and affords it a tremendous opportunity to further define itself to prospective students and the larger campus community. When honors programs celebrate service, it helps dispel the historical stigma of elitism, privilege, and entitlement charged against honors. More importantly, service by its very nature constitutes action and what better life skill can we instill in our students than to take the knowledge and insights they glean from the classroom and put those skills and energy to practical use through service. When that service includes intentional reflection and debriefing sessions it moves beyond volunteerism as students soon recognize they often learn more and gain more from those they "serve" than what they offer.
- 6) Students who complete 10 hours of **service** per semester are eligible for the program's **Good Citizenship Award**.
- 7) **First year residential experience** - The program offers a significant residential component and enjoys a tremendous relationship with the office of Residential Life, under the direction of Dr. Steve Radwanski. (NCHC 7.8). This relationship is the envy of many honors programs nationally and should continue to deepen and expand as a win/win/win for honors community building, housing best practices in living/learning communities, and recruitment/retention of students.
- 8) **Faculty Governance** – Stockton enjoys a standing committee, the Honors Council, which works in concert with the Honors Director on issues of curriculum, governance, policy, development, and evaluation deliberations (NCHC 6.2). Honors merits congratulations for creating and implementing an Honors Faculty Handbook <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1z8qqWpgjdRJKFrzE2dXgbzevlUXVtIQUzw7L-V5ZV6E/edit?usp=sharing>), which follows guidelines from the NCHC. The handbook addresses issues of governance including the process for faculty to gain the opportunity to teach an Honors course.
- 9) Honors has established an annual Honors student program **assessment** and ongoing Honors course assessment, which examines Honors student learning outcomes and university essential learning outcomes interrelate (NCHC 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 1.6 & 1.7).
- 10) Honors has developed an outstanding **application as part of the recruitment and admissions process** for prospective students. The questions are worded in such a way that virtually prevents a "cut & paste" response and the prompts enable candidates to introduce themselves far beyond grade point average AP scores, and a CV.
- 11) Since the 2015 review, the Honors Program expanded collaborative efforts with the **Admissions** Office and contributes to all Open Houses and Instant Decision Days. Honors also hosts an Honors Day-in-the-Life event each spring semester, allowing prospective students to shadow current students in the program.
- 12) Honors utilizes a clearly articulated set of admissions criteria (NCHC 2.2).
- 13) Honors clearly specifies retention and probation policies and requirements (NCHC 2.4).
- 14) Honors clearly specifies requirements for satisfactory program completion (NCHC 2.5).
- 15) The distinction achieved by the completion of honors requirements is publicly announced and recorded (NCHC 5.7).
- 16) Honors students receive honor-related academic **advising** from qualified faculty and/or staff (NCHC 7.1). Dr. Duntley connects with all students in the program and has a strong partnership in Academic Advising from Assistant Director Rich Trama.

- 17) The **Student Executive Board** functions through a set of transparent guidelines, operates with autonomy, has a voice in in governance & direction of the Honors Program, and provides co-curricular programming for all students in the honors community (NCHC 7.3, 7.4 and 7.5).
- 18) **The program holds respect in the Stockton community beyond Academic Affairs** as it exemplifies highly reputed standards and models of excellence for students and faculty across the campus (NCHC 8.2). In addition to residential life, academic advising, faculty and students, Stockton Honors is valued across a wide swath of the campus including, but not limited to a) Stockton Center for Community Engagement (Dr. Awilda Colon); b) Facilities (Don Hudson, John Fritsch, & Rhianon Lepree); c) Enrollment Management & Admissions (Dr. Bob Heinrich).
- 19) **Preparing students for Graduate/Professional school opportunities.** Honors has established a connection with the Office of Graduate Studies (NCHC 8.2). They will provide a seminar each semester about how to pursue post-graduate professional school opportunities.
- 20) **Active learning** is a more common component of recently developed honors courses. For example, *Honors: Fisheries in Crisis* brings students to Atlantic Coast fisheries to experience the science behind the topic. *Honors: History of Corrections* explores the historical origins of modern approaches to criminal punishments and includes field trips to regional penitentiaries (NCHC 4.6).
- 21) The implementation of the newly designed **honors capstone course** will help to put a bookend on the latter part of a students' honors experience (NCHC 4.1).
- 22) Since the last review, Honors has taken concrete steps to make the Honors Program more visible on campus (NCHC 8.1).
 - a) The Director engaged a professional graphic designer, who pro-bono designed an Honors Logo. The logo, a great idea with a great design, now appears on T-shirts, bookmarks, stickers, bumper stickers, lanyards, water bottles, and a developing array of items which students can purchase or win at Honors events.
 - b) Through outreach efforts to the Facilities Division, signage appears on the designated student room (Honors Center) along with a bulletin board on the outside wall.
 - c) The Honors Student E-board has a designated officer for communications and to that end the Honors Program has established social media outlets.
 - d) The Honors Program now has an Honors banner for use at student gatherings and admissions related programs.

III. Threats to a Vibrant Honors Program at Stockton

- 1) Upper-administration level changes. At the time of this report, a new president has been appointed for fall 2023 and the current provost has tendered her resignation. A search is anticipated in the summer.
- 2) The current **senior administration** does not have a clear vision for the value of honors education. In NCHC related reviews it is typical for the external reviewer to include conversations with both the President and Provost of an institution. I had neither. Closely related to this issue is prioritization through budget. Honors at Stockton currently operates on shoestring **funding** in relationship to vibrant programs running at institutions of similar size and reputation.
- 3) The current **reporting structure** demonstrates an administrative low priority toward honors. National practice dictates that Honors Directors report to the university Provost or, at the very least, an Associate Provost as the operations of a robust Honors Program serve the total university community and go well beyond any individual college. As evidence of this threat, I offer the following observations:
 - a) The program is not included in any planning. If honors receives mention in planning documents, it is without consultation with the Honors Program.

- b) The Honors Director is not invited to meetings of Program Chairs and Directors even within the School of General Studies where the honors program currently reports. This further illustrates my previous concerns about lack of top administrative support for the value of honors.
- 4) **Visibility** – while space on any campus is precious and limited and while designated “named” space (a Crew Team for instance) gains motivation from a financial backer, the physical space for honors on Stockton’s campus is a major threat to honor’s growth, development, and ability to play a critical role in recruitment and retention.
 - 5) **Leadership rotation.** Stockton does not appear to view the Honors Director as a position in which to grow and develop but rather as a rotating door. Few programs are built by individuals denied the opportunity to build. No football coach or band director would thrive knowing their position would not likely last beyond a few years. While there must always be a review process and accountability standards, the lack of sustained leadership provides a threat to any enhancement.
 - 6) **Departmental compensation for Faculty Outsourced to Honors.** The ideal NCHC model for an Honors Director is to hold rank and tenure in an academic department and to be on loan to Honors during the individual’s appointment. No department should be penalized for having faculty teach, lead, and/or serve in honors. The expectation exists for the upper administration to budget a replacement faculty member to cover the departmental workload previously held by the Honors Director. The Honors Director should have no expectation to engage in any departmental teaching, advisement of non-honors students or any departmental service. While the Honors Director should maintain a scholarly agenda, the institution (and hopefully department) should expect a “new” national affiliation will be NCHC. Furthermore, attendance and participation in the National Convention of the NCHC and efforts to publish in honors journals represent valued and accepted professional/scholarly development for the Honors Director with respect to CV development and performance reviews including tenure and promotion. I was stunned to learn that the Criminal Justice department receives no compensation to cover Dr. Duntley’s assignment to honors. For clarity, Dr. Duntley’s Criminal Justice colleagues speak quite highly of him and of honors education, but the department is taking a hit on instructional coverage of classes essential for their majors and Dr. Duntley retains expectations in advising and service which represents unfair labor practice.
 - 7) **Director’s Compensation.** The current director’s compensation for work with honors, without an overload, is unbelievably LESS than what he would earn as a faculty member teaching in the Criminal Justice and Master’s in Criminal Justice Programs, where overload teaching is the norm. Indeed, to make the same salary as he previously held, in other words to avoid a pay decrease for willingness to lead and serve Stockton through this role, the director needs to teach an overload. This practice, at best, lacks any incentive, and is ethically unjust. The work an honors director oversees represents way more extended hours than teaching due to the demand for presence in so many co-curricular student events and administrative responsibilities that mandate intersection with multiple offices on campus (e.g., Admissions, Assessment, Alumni, Enrollment Management, Advising, to name just a few). In short, course reductions and appropriate compensation are not “perks”, they are essential.
 - 8) **Leadership burnout.** The current director teaches in his home department as well as courses in honors. His home department, while supportive of his work in honors, expresses dissatisfaction with his pull back from departmental service as he increases time with honors. The current director is the de facto advisor to **all** honors students and still holds an advising responsibility within his home department. Unlike any other faculty the Honors Director holds responsibility for recruiting new students, recruiting faculty (without any compensation enticements) cultivating relationships with admissions, housing, registrar, financial aid, advising center, space management, and alumni affairs. He also must rely on a ½ administrative assistant who resides in a totally different building. Many times, he undertakes

traditional clerical duties, such as duplicating, answering phone calls from prospective students/family members, and scheduling zoom interviews for an external five-year review. To my astonishment, Dr. Duntley did not share any of this in terms of a complaint ----- indeed he (and Stockton) is blessed that he loves his job, and more so deeply respects and values his colleagues and students. But, at best, this pace does not enable the time needed to envision programmatic growth and, at worst, this pace is not sustainable as a healthy lifestyle.

IV. Concerns/Weaknesses followed by Opportunities/Recommendations – in the following sections I address the 14 major topics from the 2015 review. I begin each section with a bullet list of *Concerns* about the program that show *Weakness* and are most often magnified by one of the Seven Threats to Honors as found in section III. I then follow with specific *Opportunities* that exist and more robustly, *Recommendations* to help maximize the potential Stockton honors holds for enriching the lives of the students, faculty, and overall institution.

1) **PERSONNEL** – The current model for the Program Director is woefully under-resourced and subject to multiple threats that impede the PD's ability to maximize the potential benefits honors can offer the institution and its students. Specific weaknesses/concerns include:

- No stability in leadership due to the practice of director rotation (Threat # 5).
- Relational strain between the Director and the Director's home department due to lack of any compensation to the home department to replace the Director's departmental workload (Threat #6).
- Little visibility due to no designated space for an Honors Director's office (Threat #4).
- Little visibility and lack of ability due to upper administration denying an ability to showcase honors education and enable honors to maximize its ability to enhance the university as a valued part of any strategic planning due to the current reporting structure (Threats #1, #2 and #3).
- Inequitable compensation to the Director by any standard. (Threat #7).
- Inability to maximize the leadership needed from an Honors Director due to the lack of clerical/administrative support. Clerical and hospitality/reception are high demands for an honors program which are being met by the current director at the cost of his time being devoted, more appropriately, to program enhancement (Threat #8).

A) **PROGRAM DIRECTOR** – RECOMMENDATION: Honors needs a full time Program Director dedicated to honors that includes the individual's teaching, advising, service, and professional development. No Program Director should have any formal expectations for teaching, advising, service, and/or professional development within their home department during their tenure as Honors Program Director. **NOTE: Faculty, students, and administrative partners campus-wide see this as THE top priority; I concur.**

Unlike any discipline-based department, Honors constitutes a university wide academic program, serving and engaging students and faculty from multiple disciplines. To this end, an Honors Program functions much like a mini university. An Honors Director requires wide-ranging knowledge and relationships, including: (a) knowledge of best practices of Honors Programs; (b) knowledge of one's home Honors Program, including its strengths, weaknesses, history, and desired future; (c) knowledge of institutional partners required to complete Honors tasks; (d) relationships with staff and faculty who contribute to Honors or seek assistance from Honors

students; (e) relationships with faculty who teach within the Honors Program; (f) relationships with administrators who share their faculty with the Honors Program; (g) knowledge of capabilities of Event Services; (h) knowledge of Admissions and Orientation calendars and programs; (i) knowledge of Residence Life policies, calendars, and housing availability; (j) knowledge of university purchasing procedures and vendors; (k) knowledge of campus catering capabilities and restrictions; (l) knowledge of campus software platforms to obtain information needed for the program, such as Argos, Slate, Adobe Creative Suite, and Omni CMS; (m) knowledge of internal program processes related to Honors Admissions, the Honors Curriculum, Course Scheduling, the Honors Student E-Board, Co-Curricular activity requirements, and Co-Curricular Portfolios; (n) alumni development and cultivation; (o) international programming and global education; just to name a few. Honors Programs can only thrive and grow when their Faculty Directors have established the requisite knowledge, relationships, and technical skills to support the expansive reach of the Honors Program on campus. Indeed, Dr. Duntley, was recruited for his current post as Honors Director, in part, because he held knowledge and relationships with many offices on campus from running Stockton's CSI Summer camp (www.stocktoncsi.com), and because he worked in Student Affairs and Residence Life as a graduate student (elaborated from Lanier, 20).

Three additional elements of the Director's position must gain attention by university decision makers to thwart threats, previously identified, which left unattended could well derail any serious investment of institutional resources and the Director's resource of time.

- [1] – Threats #1, #2, #3 & #8 – **REPORTING STRUCTURE** – RECOMMENDATION –
The Honors Director should report to the institution's chief academic officer, the provost, or at the very least an Associate Provost with the appropriate portfolio to maximize the benefits of honors to the institution and larger campus community, and advocate for programmatic needs to enable it to fulfill its potential.
- [2] - Threat #5 – **ROTATION** – RECOMMENDATION - The Director of Honors should hold a five-year appointment, renewable for additional five-year blocks, that involves a fourth-year performance review from the Honors Council and Provost.
- [3] – Threat #6 – **DEPARTMENT COMPENSATION** – RECOMMENDATIONS –
 - [a] The home department for anyone appointed to Honors as Director should receive compensation for a sustainable full-time, temporary position.
 - [b] The Honors Director should have no official commitments of teaching, advising, service, or professional development with their home department.
- [4] – Threat #7 & #8 - **DIRECTOR'S COMPENSATION** – RECOMMENDATIONS –
 - [a] Compensate the Director with a 3-course release each fall semester and a 4-courses release in the spring semester, with a requirement to teach an Honors course in the fall as the Director's 4th course that semester. This at least protects a full-time faculty member from taking a pay cut by assuming this position.
 - [b] As a year-round position, the Director should, at **minimum**, have a summer administrative appointment equal to 2 courses (8 credits).

- B) **ADMINISTRATIVE/CLERICAL ASSISTANT (AA)** – RECOMMENDATION: Honors desperately needs a **full time** Administrative/Clerical Assistant (AA). NOTE: **Faculty, students, and administrative partners interviewed see this as THE second priority. I would tie it with the first.** When I became director 25 years ago, in my mind it hinged on getting a full-time clerical staff position. That resource, more than any other, gave us the flexibility, space, and foundation to exponentially grow the program. As the program grows, this position, which may start as fully secretarial, could increase in responsibilities and rank.

The Director must have time to focus attention on issues appropriately placed in the hands of faculty leadership and delegate logistical office running tasks to a dedicated/full time assistant. Moreover, for purposes of recruitment of high ability students and to support retention, a person and not a voice machine should answer the phone from prospective students and/or family and for current students who seek assistance. I offer two additional considerations needed to make this position effective:

- [1] – **LOCATION** – RECOMMENDATION - The Honors Program AA should have **designated office space in close proxemics, ideally next to the Program Director** (addresses **Threat #4 – Visibility**).
- [2] – **FULL TIME** – RECOMMENDATION - **The AA should work full-time and during the normal business hours of the institution** as this position is often the first face/voice prospective students and their family’s witness. The position serves as the communication point person to connect honors to the larger institution as well as the external community. Confidentiality and dedication are top priorities for vocational success.

A full time AA dedicated to the Honors Program and located near the Honors Director addresses **Threat #8 – Burnout**. An AA does not mean the Honors Director will work any less, indeed, the work will intensify. The key rests with the Director’s ability to delegate and mentor. A good AA guards the Director’s time, assumes office management tasks, and bolsters retention through the development of sustained relationships with students in the Honors Program. The position also functions as the voice of honors (and often Stockton) each spring as the AA is often first to connect with prospective students AND their families (elaborated from Lanier, 20).

- C) **ASSISTANT DIRECTOR (AD)** – RECOMMENDATION: Honors merits a **faculty AD with a minimum quarter time release/reassignment each semester and the ability to teach a minimum of one honors course yearly, or better yet, one each semester**. An AD helps address **Threat #8 – Burnout** and simultaneously strengthens a more inclusive governance, by providing the director with an officially dedicated peer to share time with vision and reflection concerning Honors. Depending on qualification, interest, and need, an AD could hold primary responsibility for critical tasks such as recruitment, advisement, or assessment as well as represent the program at campus and community events to free up the Director’s time. Finally, an AD could add stability to the program should the director need to step away from the program for a specified time. Note, some institutions have Assistant Directors from both the Academic side (a tenured professor) and the Student Affairs side (a professional

from an area such as, in alphabetical order: Admissions, Alumni, Counseling, Residence Life, Student Activities, etc.).

2) **BUDGET RIGHTSIZED** - "The Honors Program must be allocated a sensible budget that covers the salary costs for all members of the Honors administration, the operating costs for the Honors office, the costs of delivering the Honors curriculum and its course offerings, and the costs of providing the range of extra-curricular activities that are common to Honors programs and colleges nationwide" (elaborated from Lanier, 20). RECOMMENDATION – **An institution of Stockton's reputation in national standings should have a budget aligned with the University's strategic budgeting that would properly invest in current students and afford opportunity for growth (Threats #2 – lack of senior support and #4 - visibility) .**

- No one would disagree over the value of offering Honors students more of the opportunities available to peers at other universities. Upper-level university decision makers must recognize the value of programmatic financial investments in Honors programming, or it will remain unmet.
- No budget increase has occurred since the 2015 review.
- Indeed, funding should be institutionally provided, akin to athletics, to help offset the costs of the experiential learning that is a hallmark of honors pedagogy. I was quite disappointed to learn that the 2022-23 honors operating budget was cut by \$2,000. The result drops honors funding from \$16,000 to \$14,000; this represents an institutional commitment of just **\$70.02 per student annually**. Of additional frustration, the Honors Director was never sent a communication informing him of the decision, it came to him on a spread sheet, well after the decision was made, from a clerical staff member shared with the advising division. Clearly this budget is woefully inadequate as is the method of communication and the lack of genuine clerical support. Still worse yet, a substantial amount of funding never goes to current students but is spent on recruitment. Rather than invest in high impact practices such as off-site service learning, direct experience of tremendous educational opportunities in New York City, Philadelphia, and Washington, DC, supporting faculty/student research, supporting class retreats/overnight conferences, and bringing guest speakers to campus, to name just a few. Out of their current budget of \$14,000 nearly 35-40% of those funds are devoted to purchasing supplies for Open House, hosting prospective students for the Day-in-the-Life event, and other admissions-related programming. Honors should absolutely demonstrate active human capital resource dedication to recruitment, but funding should come from the office of Admissions or other Institutional source.

OPPORTUNITIES/RECOMMENDATIONS - While waiting on appeals for budget, consider the following:

- A) RECOMMENDATION - **Meet with the Admissions Director and/or Enrollment Management Dean to discuss financial support for all admissions related activities conducted by Honors.** The contributions of human capital from honors faculty and students in their ability to recruit students to Stockton will prove a sound investment. .
- B) RECOMMENDATION - The Honors Student Exec-Board should actively **explore the creation of an Honors Student Association (H.S.A.)** as a sanctioned/recognized student organization under the umbrella of Student Affairs. They should have the ability to retain their same organizational structure as the Exec-Board of (H.S.A.) but would gain the benefits of:
 - 1) Greater visibility on campus.
 - 2) Greater opportunities for non-honors students to consider affiliating with the

co-curricular arm of the Honors Program.

3) Opportunities for a new stream of funding for which they might apply.

- C) RECOMMENDATION - Establish an enrollment-based funding system for Honors Programming in which students contribute \$75 per student per semester and the university demonstrates its recognition and commitment to them by devoting double the matching contribution in the amount of \$150 per student per semester. This is a win-win for the Honors Program and the University: (a) Honors students will help to fund the experiences from which they benefit; (b) Stockton will have a specific, enrollment-based formula to determine program funding each fiscal year; (c) More programming can be offered to Honors students, consistent with National Guidelines; (d) Stockton's greater contribution than students' to Honors programming will recognize and demonstrate its commitment to our students and make the students feel better about taking on some of the burden of funding their Honors experiences. NOTE: this fund reflects an **additional revenue** stream for honors and should, in no way, replace or otherwise jeopardize, the current level of funding.
- D) RECOMMENDATION - Involve multiple voices in funding requests; do NOT put the task solely on the Director's head. Directors often get labeled as constantly begging for resources. While the director holds great responsibility for the health of the Honors Program, institutional financial support often comes best when it involves multiple advocates. Engage the Honors Council, community leaders, alumni, and students, parents, businesses who support honors students as interns and any other unique constituent group to collaborate on budget requests.

3) CURRICULUM – STUDENT ACCESS

- Students report scheduling honors classes becomes particularly challenging after their first year due to access to classes which conflict with courses in their majors or become filled before they can acquire a seat. Further, students expressed a lack of knowledge as to when honors classes would be offered in subsequent semesters, so advance planning proves difficult.
- Students report some confusion with advisement and a way to better understand the requirements needed to graduate in both honors and their majors. NOTE: The Honors Director currently advises all honors students – **Threat #8**.
- Consistently offering Honors classes beyond the initial Freshman seminar, due to the program's reliance on faculty volunteering their time and being released from responsibilities in their home programs, remains a critical challenge. Particularly as the program grows, a need exists for more course offerings.
- There are currently no incentives for Honors Faculty or Honors Council members to take on Honors advisees in addition to the large groups of students they advise in their home programs.

OPPORTUNITIES/RECOMMENDATIONS

A) RECOMMENDATION – **PRIORITY SCHEDULING** - “*Priority registration for Honors students at Stockton must be established if the program is going to retain students*” (Lanier, 22).

This verbatim statement, offered in 2015, remains salient today: I fully concur with the previous recommendation and strongly urge decision makers at Stockton to afford honors students priority scheduling. It appears that some power holders at Stockton presume priority scheduling is a perk, luxury, undeserved entitlement for the privileged. Such thinking is archaic at best and cruel at worst. Institutions hold an ethical responsibility to offer honors students priority scheduling; not doing so undercuts diversity, equity, and inclusion as it prohibits students in certain programs and majors from participating in and completing an honors educational experience due to denied access to the classes needed to graduate in a timely (4 year) fashion. It is disingenuous for an institution to recruit students into an honors program which is nearly mathematically and logistically impossible to compete due to scheduling conflicts honors students must experience as they attempt to balance the requirements of courses within their major and those needed for honors.

The challenge in ***scheduling classes was the top logistical concern students raised*** as obstacles to their engagement in honors and they cited it as a major reason some of their peers gave as to why they dropped honors.

With sadness, I share the feedback on this topic I received from Dr. Duntley: *One of my greatest frustrations as Honors Director has been the process of pursuing priority registration for years, getting final approval, and having it revoked by the provost’s office just weeks before it was to be implemented. It created a strain in the relationship between the honors students and me because they had difficulty understanding how a policy that was so recently adopted was taken from them only weeks before registration was scheduled to begin.*

Priority scheduling is a non-financial cost to the university and the value it affords students in their ability to have a level playing field to achieve what they were recruited to do when they come to campus is, put simply, the right thing to do.

B) RECOMMENDATION – **HONORS ADVISEMENT** - “*Protocols for advising Honors students need to be clarified and codified*” (Lanier, 22).

As in 2015, advising remains a need for honors students, a monumental task for the Honors Director who serves as de facto advisor for all honors students. Having an additional designated individual to assist with this load would help alleviate director burn out (**Threat #8**). This need offers justification for the Honors Director to have support from a full-time administrative staff and an Assistant director.

[1] RECOMMENDATION - ***Create templates to graduation for the various academic majors (see sample in Appendix)***.

[2] RECOMMENDATION – ***Work with Assistant Director Rich Trama in the Advisement Center to explore best practices*** and insights on where students appear to need the most guidance.

[3] RECOMMENDATION - Explore the possibility of ***departments assigning any honors students to the same advisor***. That advisor then becomes a liaison with the Honors Program in any curricular advising communications needed. A win/win can occur if the faculty advisor for honors students in ____ major is also a member of the Honors Council or teaches in honors.

4) **FACULTY STAFFING** – Every faculty member I spoke with talked about how much they loved teaching in the program, and all wished they could do more.

- Contractual expectations faculty hold to their departments, which they also value, often prevent them from teaching for honors.
- While contractually every Stockton faculty member is obligated to teach a minimum of one G-course course annually. This practice is increasingly ignored due to demand from departments.

OPPORTUNITIES/RECOMMENDATIONS

- A) RECOMMENDATION - **Formal Quarter Time Articulation to Honors** – explore formal designation of identified professors to an HON/GEN course to enable greater stability of the pool of faculty the program director can count on when building course schedules. Establishing regular/predictable teaching opportunities enhances a sense of permanency with honors and thus increases engagement.
- B) RECOMMENDATION - Brainstorm with Honors Council to **identify incentives to entice colleagues to actively engage in** honors education.
- C) RECOMMENDATION - **Educate faculty about opportunities** for research that can lead to national level juried conference presentations and/or publications available to them through the National Collegiate Honors Council. Such work can both bring added affirmation to faculty and provide concrete support for those in the track for tenure and/or promotion.
- D) RECOMMENDATION - **Sponsor faculty development** **“symposiums/retreats/workshops/book clubs” around a common theme related to Honors pedagogy.** E.g., host a 10:00am-2:00pm, with lunch provided , retreat/workshop on integrating high practice pedagogy into honors courses that involves an initial session highlighting “best practices” and then an opportunity to infuse new ideas/approaches into current or new syllabi. Use funds to supply lunch and provide those in full attendance with a book addressing interdisciplinary practices which could function as the basis for a future faculty event. During the designated lunch break, invite students to join to enable faculty/student interaction. This affirms students, reminds faculty why they are there, and builds community by fostering relationship development as they share a meal.

5) CURRICULAR DEVELOPMENT and ASSESSMENT ALIGNMENT –

- The struggle to keep Honors courses adequately staffed has not allowed for consistent, implementable discussions about the features and aspects desired for Honors education at Stockton. The discussion has happened for individual courses, such as the Honors Freshman Seminar, where multiple sections are offered.
- A challenge is high turnover and unpredictability in the faculty available to teach honors courses. In the past 6 years, seven professors have left teaching in the program due to retirements, needs of their home programs, or shifts in professional priorities.
- The honors director cannot compel faculty to participate in course evaluations and when evaluations do occur, the faculty are not compelled to share the results. Valuable data and insights on curriculum enhancements from this lack of direct assessment is being lost.

- Because honor programs rely on volunteers to teach honors courses, the program cannot exert a strong influence on the content of their courses, and faculty have little incentive to invest in a new course preparation of honors courses that may be assigned to them.
- A macro-analysis of the entire curriculum is needed. Emphasis should focus on themes, assignments, and evaluation rubrics that will support consistency in student experience.
- In alignment with NCHC standards, the Honors Director and Council collaboratively established a distinctive first year experience and Senior capstone. More work is needed to choose and develop appropriate course work to offer between these alpha and omega experiences.
- Because all of Stockton's courses are worth 4 credits, they currently require 6 total classes of students who enroll as Freshmen, 4 classes for those who enroll as Sophomores, and 3 classes for those who enroll as Juniors. While this model has utility, it does not reflection the national expectations of honors designated curriculum, a range of 20-30%.

OPPORTUNITIES/RECOMMENDATIONS:

- A) RECOMMENDATION - Honors courses currently fulfill most general education requirements for students in the program. Hold discussions with departments to **explore if an Honors seminar could also fulfill a major program requirement** if the course is taught by a member of that discipline. Example: might the *Fisheries in Crisis* course, taught by Dr. Mark Sullivan, fulfill a major program requirement in biology/marine science? Finding ways to “double dip” courses with requirements enables students to have more scheduling flexibility.
- B) **RECOMMENDATION - Explore faculty articulation to Honors (Threat #8) (see #4-A).**
- C) RECOMMENDATION - Stockton Honors currently prioritizes the themes of interdisciplinary learning and service. Capitalize on these themes; **create Honors Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs)**. Keep it simple, three or four at most. **These should appear on every course syllabus** and link into the Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) of the individual course. **(Please note example at the conclusion of this section).**
- D) RECOMMENDATION - With the establishment of a more dependable set of course offerings, **place additional emphasis on expanding experiential learning and interdisciplinarity across all honors courses.**
- [1] – NOTE: Encourage faculty through workshops and incentives to incorporate active learning into their courses.
- [2] - NOTE: As part of the honors strategic plan, overtly incorporate various approaches to Interdisciplinary study within the honors curriculum.
- E) RECOMMENDATION - **Overtly incorporate the concepts of reflection and application into the description and evaluation of any assignment related to experiential learning and interdisciplinary.** As students reflect on their experiences and use those insights to draft proposals to enact/support change they will maximize their experiences and produce artifacts suitable for program level assessment.
- F) RECOMMENDATION - Work with Honors Council to **generate a standard honors course evaluation document for** the purposes of curricular **assessment.**
- G) RECOMMENDATION - Work with the Honors Council to **generate a policy for confidentiality and in-house use of the honors course evaluation document.**
- H) RECOMMENDATION – To achieve a more robust program, **consider three tracks** under the umbrella of honors: **CORE, BRIDGE, SEMINAR CERTIFICATE.**
- I) RECOMMENDATION – **The three tracks are comprised of two types of courses:**
- [1] – **CORE** – courses, often multiple section, run on a regularly and predictably scheduled time. Students taking any CORE class should anticipate the same content and delivery

irrespective of who teaches the course. Only students in the CORE or BRIDGE TRACKS are eligible to take these courses.

- [2] – **SPECIAL TOPIC (ST)** – these are innovative and creative offerings from your faculty. The number you offer each semester will largely depend on your enrollment numbers. You should anticipate at least two to three per semester while you “pilot” all of this, but it could easily grow more (and for a variety of reasons you want it to!). While students accepted to the CORE, BRIDGE and ST tracks should have first shot (priority scheduling) to enroll in any Honors ST course, leaving it open to the discretion of the professor of record to enable non-honors students, who would make contributions to the course, to enroll for credit is fine. This is a tremendous opportunity to grow the Seminar Certificate Program; a student in biology takes the fisheries course, is filled with awe and wants more classes in their schedules with such innovative experiences. While you would want to have three to four offered per semester, the subject matter can vary greatly and there is no expectation for uniformity, except in addressing the Honors Program Level Outcomes (PLOs). ST classes embrace the notion of “honors as a pedagogical laboratory” as they may or may not be offered in the future.

- J) **RECOMMENDATION – CORE TRACK – Total 8 courses – 32 credits** including **a sequence of 5 common courses (20 credits) all students *must* take plus an additional 3 honors special topic seminars (12 credits) of their own choice.** With the permission of the Honors Director, 1 course (4 credits) could be an independent study course or a research focused internship.

[1] All courses clearly reflect the Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs) of the Honors Program.

[2] All of the courses would also fulfill a GEN requirement OR major program requirement.

[3] All courses would exemplify high impact practices of reflection, active learning, and when possible service learning.

[4] Eligibility – entering fall semester first year students or external transfer students with less than 24 credits.

[5] The CORE of COMMON courses include:

a. – Freshman seminar.

b. – Capstone seminar with the following pre-requisites needed to enroll:

1. completion of freshman seminar
2. completion of the three common/core Honors classes
3. junior or senior standing
4. minimum GPA of 3.3
5. minimum of 1 of the three mandated special topics classes

c. - Three CORE seminars, to be determined, that would be critical in their reflection about their capstone course. Ideally, these courses would fulfill a general education requirement or a required course within the student's major.

1. One should have an overt ethical component.
2. One could be methodological – public opinion, survey construction, basic statistics.
3. One could deal with change and sustainability – this could incorporate hard skills like grant proposal writing, Gallup Strength Finders, and Persuasive Public Speaking as well as issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion.
4. All need regular offering and have a standard syllabus across multiple sections.

5. Potential schedule:

Fall Freshman	- HON Freshman seminar
Spring Freshman	- HON CORE Course #1
Fall Sophomore	- HON CORE Course #2
Spring Sophomore	- HON CORE Course #3
Fall Junior	- HON ST Course #1
Spring Junior	- HON ST Course #2 or Capstone
Fall Senior	- HON ST Course #2 or Capstone
Spring Seniors	- HON ST Course #3 (if not completed sooner)

[6] - In addition to the five-course core, students take three "special topics (ST) Honors classes".

- a. ST classes will ideally double dip as a graduation requirement by meeting either a GEN or major program requirement as well as Honors.
- b. ST classes, unlike CORE classes would rotate. Because these are 100% elective, greater numbers and expertise areas can participate.

[7] – Students receive transcript designation and commencement recognition by completing the CORE program while maintaining a minimum 3.3 cumulative GPA at time of graduation.

K) RECOMMENDATION – **BRIDGE TRACK** – same as CORE, in all respects, except:

- [1] – Students not currently in the honors CORE TRACK, who attain a 3.75 or higher based on their first semester grades are invited to join the BRIDGE TRACK which will ultimately lead to graduation in the CORE program.
- [2] - Students begin the core with the entering students in the fall of the following year, and use the potential sequence:

Fall Freshman	- No HON class – grades from this semester will determine membership for spring
Spring Freshman	- HON Freshman Seminar* or HON ST Course #1 & HON CORE Course #1
Fall Sophomore	- HON CORE Course #2 & HON Freshman Seminar or HON ST Course #1
Spring Sophomore	- HON CORE Course #3
Fall Junior	- HON ST Course #2
Spring Junior	- HON ST Course #3 or Capstone
Fall Senior	- HON ST Course #3 or Capstone
Spring Seniors	- Open

NOTE: *You will need to offer one section of the Freshman experience class in the spring for this population of students OR have them take the Honors Freshman experience as a first semester sophomore, along with the incoming Freshmen. The sophomores become de facto peer mentors and BRIDGE the honors experience for the entering students and upper-class students in the CORE.

L) RECOMMENDATION – SEMINAR CERTIFICATE TRACK - 4 Special Topics courses (16 credits)

- [1] – Exists completely outside the CORE classes. Eligibility - open to students who are external transfer student with more than 24 credits with a minimum of a 3.5 cumulative GPA on all prior college course work or native students with a minimum 3.5 cumulative GPA after the completion of 36 credits with a cumulative GPA of 3.5.
- [2] - Admitted students must complete a minimum of 4 special topic honors seminars (12 credits), with a C+ or better, prior to graduation.
- [3] – Students receive an Honors Program Certificate of Merit for completion of the 4 honors courses and attaining a minimum 3.3 cumulative grade point average prior to their graduation.

Example of PLO inclusion on honors course syllabi documents (I used GEN 1033 but this would stand for each honors designated class):

Honors Program Level Outcomes (PLOs) for all Students

All undergraduate Honors courses are designed to meet program-based student learning outcomes consistent with the Honors Program’s mission statement:

Stockton Honors challenges students to launch extraordinary lives. Our program provides a supportive, enriching, and challenging environment for students who are among the most motivated and talented at the University. We ask students to take intellectual risks, to seek an understanding of the interdependence of all branches of knowledge, to engage with the complexities of difference and diversity, and to value a life of continuous learning and personal growth. We encourage our students to seek opportunities for experiential learning, independent research, and community engagement. Stockton Honors is a transformational community of critical thinkers; a community that is inclusive, highly qualified, engaged, and motivated to lead. We strive to equip our students with the creativity, adaptability, and understanding required to thrive in an interconnected world. We seek to be at the forefront of the University’s pursuit of academic excellence, transformative education, and civic engagement, helping undergraduates craft meaningful college learning experiences that connect to their local and global communities and draw on the unique resources and cultures of Southern New Jersey.

The Honors Council maintains these **program** outcomes represent the skills, knowledge, and attitudes which students should experience in their Stockton honors education. We designed GEN 1033 – Honors: A Life of the Mind, to contribute to the development of the following program-based student learning outcomes:

- [1] Students in Honors at Stockton University will excel in an intellectual learning community where students from multiple disciplinary areas strive for academic excellence.** Students enrolled in GEN 1033 constitute the entering first year students in the Honors Program. The class of approximately 20 students represents over 36 different academic disciplines drawn from each of the campus’ academic units. Students will engage in strengthening their multi-discipline learning community through multiple collaborative group projects.
- [2] Students in Honors at Stockton University will identify and acquire an understanding of leadership theory and leadership skills.** Students enrolled in GEN 1033 will become familiar with a variety of leadership theories through readings, classroom presentations and discussions, and out-of-classroom assignments.
- [3] Students in Honors at Stockton University will demonstrate involvement and civic engagement where students apply their leadership theory and skill through service in multiple contexts.** Students enrolled in GEN 1033 will plan a strategy for community engagement, actively participate and then critically evaluate their service contributions through building community within the Honors Program.

6) HONORS ADMINISTRATIVE CONTROL – “As the Honors curriculum changes, there will come an overriding need for Honors to gain appropriate control over all facets of the Honors curriculum, especially the selection of Honors faculty and the scheduling of Honors courses” (Lanier, 7).

- This problem continues. Note enough administrative support is provided to ensure stability in course offerings.
- The Honors Director has little control over the times honors courses are offered.
- The Honors Director works from the following rotation document, and strives to encourage honors faculty to plan ahead in their requests to their home programs to teach an honors course.
https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1ztXOpzFb9UztgZ12nE_GFXfCtGmiA24w0OCCGWoirMLU/edit?usp=sharing
This approach lacks efficiency on two levels:
 - 1) reliance on faculty to make an appeal to their department leadership.
 - 2) no input on time to schedule honors courses to insure they don't overlap and that they are at times to meet student needs.

OPPORTUNITIES/RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 1) This is a larger institutional issue and may need delay to prioritize more critical “in the moment needs”. This said, dialogue should begin with university decision makers who deal with student scheduling as this issue will only intensify should the program increase size and/or more robust participation by all academic units on campus. This said, my concrete recommendations include:
 - [a] – Provide a full-time designated AA to the Honors Program (**threats #4 & #8**).
 - [b] – Give the Honors Director the ability to schedule Honors courses for at least one year in advance of the actual course offerings.
 - [c] - Negotiate with department coordinators and the registrar to seek regular/consistent times to offer honors classes whereas little conflict from majors can occur.
 - [d] – Give the Honors Director guaranteed time slots for regularly offered honors courses, (e.g., GEN 1001). Make these slots known to departments so they know to keep faculty, in their departments who would teach the honors course, available for those time blocks.
- 2) OPPORTUNITY - Good progress exists in identifying Honors faculty. Capitalize on these relationships and:
 - [a] - Begin discussions with Council members to gain commitments/desires for teaching for the coming year and times they are willing to commit to teaching an assigned section of an honors course that will not conflict with any anticipated department demands.
 - [b] - Start negotiations with department leaders/College Deans to determine faculty workload agreements, that include Honors assignments within a professor's normal workload, **before** the open process of course building for subsequent semesters begins.

7) RECRUITMENT - “There is at present no strategic plan for integrating Honors recruitment efforts into the overall enrollment mission at Stockton” (Lanier, 7).

- There is still no written strategic plan. The lack of an overt coordinated and collaborative effort between admissions and honors represents a significantly missed opportunity to provide a robust win/win outcome.
- Matriculating high school seniors serve as the primary target audience for honors' recruitment efforts. While clearly important and understandable, opportunities for growth exist for transfer students, both externally and internally. Honors could contribute to these larger university goals but are not involved in those conversations.

- The issue of retention is receiving more attention on campuses nationwide. Honors is not formally included in conversations surrounding issues of retention.
- No evidence of a meaningful relationship exists between Stockton honors and Community College Programs, with respect to crafting a track for students to partake.
- A growing national trend involves honors' leadership in summer immersion experiences for youth. This can provide employment for university faculty, staff, and students and build relationships that can lead to eventual application.
- The honors budget currently spends 25-30% of its budget towards admissions activities.

OPPORTUNITIES/RECOMMENDATIONS – (Threats #2, #3, and #4)

- A) RECOMMENDATION - Collaborate with Admissions to **create a strategic recruitment plan** for honors that includes shared resources for such programs as Open Houses and the Honors Day-in-the-Life event.
- B) OPPORTUNITY – Admissions gives honors access to their application data.
- C) RECOMMENDATION - **Collaborate with Admissions** to get their guidance about particular groups of students they see valuable as targeting.
- D) RECOMMENDATION - **Collaborate with Enrollment Management and Assessment** to gather data and identify best practices from honors that aid in student retention.
- E) RECOMMENDATION – Work with the Admissions Office to **create articulation agreements for students from honors programs in area Community Colleges to easily matriculate into Stockton's program.**
- F) RECOMMENDATION - Honors is a natural win/win partner with the Enrollment Management (EM) Team. **From my conversation with Dr. Bob Henrich (EM) his area is fully open to collaborative efforts; explore them.** Such efforts should be incorporated into a strategic plan to maximize both resources of time and money. I offer three specific practices:
- [a] **Back to my high school** – during fall/Thanksgiving break encourage students in GEN 1033 to “return to their high schools” by connecting with their academic mentor (most likely a faculty member or school administrator) who can help assemble a group of current high school students who might like to learn about Stockton in general and Honors in particular. Students would get training for the content of their presentations jointly from Honors and Admissions. Stockton student ambassadors would collect contact information from interested students to share with the Admissions office for follow-up. A thank you note to the hosting high school adult should follow and come from a member of the Student Exec. Board or member of the Honors Council.
- [b] **Travel with Admissions** – coordinate high school/community recruitment fairs/events with the Admissions office where an honors student, ideally with a personal link to the school or community, might travel along and assist with the programming.
- [c] **On campus Admissions Ambassadors** – explore options for the formation of volunteer or salaried/scholarship opportunities for honors students to conduct campus tours for prospective students.
- G) OPPORTUNITY - A deeper partnership with EM can gain strength by creating opportunities for **further collaboration with Assessment.** From my conversation with Dr. Alaina Walton robust opportunities exist for partnerships in that office, including potential honors student interns/work study, to better track trends and data to provide documentation for the value of institutional financial support.

- H) RECOMMENDATION - Explore honors membership opportunities for external and internal transfer students (non-entering first year students) to have access to at least some components of honors education.
- I) OPPORTUNITY - Dr. Duntley recently proposed hosting a High School Honors summer conference. The Director of Enrollment Management tentatively agreed to support it in June 2024. I applaud this initiative and hope it comes to fruition.

8) SCHOLARSHIPS –

- “Currently, there are no completely full ride scholarships offered to Honors students at Stockton, and that is very unusual for an Honors Program at a regional comprehensive institution” (Lanier, 7).
- Students of the academic level of honors, particularly students of color, are highly recruited and qualify for scholarships. A lack of designated scholarships for honors places Stockton at a clear regional disadvantage, at the very least, from being competitive in attracting high academic students.

OPPORTUNITIES/RECOMMENDATIONS

- A) RECOMMENDATION - Stockton’s Honors Program merits recruitment/retention scholarships linked to Honors.
- B) OPPORTUNITY - A tremendous collaborative opportunity between admissions and honors exists in the reality that Stockton offers Presidential Scholarships, covering the full cost of tuition, most of which naturally go to students who would also hold eligibility for honors.
- C) RECOMMENDATION - Speak with the Development Office to see if they would:
- [1] Officially earmark “x” number of scholarships for Honors so that the Director can have that knowledge for recruitment purposes.
 - [2] Follow up on Dean Gregg’s offer of endorsement with the Development Office and see if they can support room and board scholarships for Honors students.
 - [3] Provide “x” number of scholarships for “underrepresented students” which would also assist in the goal for greater diversity.
- D) RECOMMENDATION: Any scholarships should be renewable upon the following criteria:
- [1] Good academic standing within Honors (NOTE: falling below the base line GPA to remain in the program should trigger a probationary semester aligned with a strategy to raise the student’s cumulative GPA, if the cumulative GPA fails to raise to the designate benchmark in two semesters the student should be dropped from the program and any scholarship payments ended).
 - [2] Active membership within the Honors Student Association (e.g., “x” meetings per semester – the H.S.A. should have by-laws which articulate what constitutes voting membership).
 - [3] Documentation of 10 service hours within Honors and/or the campus community per semester. Doing so makes students eligible for recognition with a **Good Citizenship Award**, demonstrating the recipient’s commitment to ideals of the Honors Program.

9) MEMBERSHIP – INCREASED ACADEMIC DIVERSITY -

- Stockton honors is underrepresented by students in professional programs (Lanier, 7).
- Due to teaching demands, faculty from professional programs are least able to contribute to the Honors Program. Further many professional program faculty are not held to the expectation of teaching a minimum of one G-course per year.
- A significant proportion of Stockton students pursue degrees in pre-professional programs making it significantly harder to schedule honors courses.

OPPORTUNITIES/RECOMMENDATIONS

- A) RECOMMENDATION: Explore opportunities with pre-professional programs to see where an honors course might double dip with a professional/disciplinary course-related credit.
- B) RECOMMENDATION: Draft “Schedule Plan to Graduation” for each program to discern:
- [1] Required courses and sequence of courses to graduate in four years (see example in Appendix).
 - [2] Observe where honors courses could most easily fit in among degree requirements.
 - [3] Explore how an honors seminar might also fulfill requirements of a student’s major.
- C) RECOMMENDATION: Collaborate with Assessment Office to document value of an Honors Program degree as valuable for “next chapter” life issues.
- D) RECOMMENDATION: Collaborate with Professional programs to see where an Honors special topics seminar might meet a degree requirement.
- E) RECOMMENDATION: As mentioned in 7-D, explore opportunities for affiliation to honors for enrolled students who may not have qualified for honors based on their high school record but have subsequently proven themselves as academically strong at Stockton. I offer some examples:
- [1] – With the university Registrar, identify any student who has completed 30-60 credits of college accredited work and attained a minimum 3.6 cumulative grade point average. Using a similar application as currently designed for incoming first year students, invite the native students to apply for honors program affiliation.
 - [a] - In an embrace of diversity-equity-inclusion, focus attention on students of color.
 - [b] – In an embrace of certificate completion, focus attention on students in academic programs where greater flexibility exists and students have room in their schedules for four additional classes.
 - [c] - Host an open house/meet greet event for accepted students with student leaders of the E-Board and faculty members of the Honors Council.
 - [2] – Create an honors certificate program, designed exclusively for students identified Through 7-e-[1], awarded at graduation for criteria along the lines of the following:
 - [a] - Completion of four honors special topic seminars with the minimum grade of C+.
 - [b] - Maintaining a cumulative GPA of 3.3.

10) **SPACE** - “The Honors Program needs clearly designated (and preferably prestigious) space” (Lanier 21-22).

- The horribly inadequate space allocation to honors has not changed, indeed, arguably it has worsened as the numbers of students in the program has seen an increase. This reality is articulated consistently from faculty and students.
- When prospective students and parents tour Stockton University there is no evidence through enhanced signage, at the very least, let alone an attractive physical space, that lets them know that honors education even exists at the institution.
- The Honors Director must utilize the office provided by the Directors' home department.
- The part-time administrative/clerical support is not physically adjacent to the Director but is in a totally different building. No signage indicates affiliation with Honors.
- The institution does provide honors students with a designated seminar room. Unfortunately, it is the size of a very small meeting room where more than eight students at a time could feel cramped. The space has virtually no space for storage of supplies needed by the E-Board leadership and/or space for commuter students to hang outerwear or stow back-packs. The space is isolated and not located near any of the following: 1) Directors Office. 2) Part-time Administrative/Clerical support. 3) Residence Hall designated for first year students. There is an issue of access for the commuter population in Honors who appear among the most consistent users. Finally, as a student shared, "I really value the space but if that is what we would show a prospective student as the university's support for Honors, it would be pretty embarrassing."

OPPORTUNITIES/RECOMMENDATIONS – (*Threats #2 & #4*)

- A) OPPORTUNITY: Last year an actual sign was given to the entrance of the existing Honors Center. Unfortunately, every non-classroom space on campus got signs of identical size and color, which does not distinguish the Honors Center from the Art Gallery.
- B) RECOMMENDATION: **Get permission for an impressive/distinctive signage to designate honors space.**
- C) RECOMMENDATION: **institution should designate the following space to Honors** in either stand-alone structure (e.g., house, small building) or as an identifiable wing/floor of an appropriate existing academic building.
- [1] **Director's office** – with dimensions adequate to undertake the administrative tasks of Honors and preparation for at least one Honors course/seminar per semester. It appears that Stockton faculty offices are small and can typically accommodate 3 to 4 people. The Honors Director's office should, at minimum, be double that space. In addition to the standard desk, workspace, bookcases and filing/storage options, the space should also accommodate a meeting area for advising students and interacting with prospective students and their family members. This office should be fully separate and distinct from any office space assigned as part of the Director's affiliation with a "home/academic department."
- [2] **AA office** – physically near the Director and with dimensions adequate to undertake the administrative tasks of Honors (e.g., duplication, filing/record keeping, reception, hospitality).
- [3] **Honors Conference-Seminar room** – space for 15-20 to accommodate Honors Council meetings, Honors Student Association Executive Board meetings, and seminar classes.
- [4] **Student Workroom and Lounge** – space for 20-25 to accommodate a hospitable space for students to meet, study, assist the AA and/or Director with work projects associated with Honors.
- [5] **Storage room/supply room/cloak closet** - space with file cabinets and storage units for all appropriate office supplies, photocopy/duplication machine, supplies related to Honors

Student Association events, hooks/rack/temporary storage cubicles designated for commuters.

[6] **Designated Honors Classroom** – Teaching Lab – The ideal is a multi-purpose room with moveable seating that can accommodate a wide modality of teaching formats. The space should contain the most advanced technology available making it a desired space for faculty to experiment and innovate. As many Honors seminars as possible should meet in the room and ample bulletin boards/wall display areas should exist to showcase student collaborative work, post Honors related community building information, and create a space that students positively identify with their Honors experience. The classroom should ideally be located close to the Conference Room so faculty could have a space to meet with students prior to or after class. Another design would align a small temporary office space adjacent the room.

B) RECOMMENDATION: **Explore options for such a space as outlined in 10)-A)-[1] to [6].** Such space enables the Honors Program to both expand and hold pride in the investment in their educational experience. The students and faculty expressed affirmation for Stockton’s new Multi-Cultural Center. Honors merits a similar feeling of pride in the institution makes in physical from faculty, students, and the full Stockton community.

[1] I understand plans are underway for renovations and possible expansion in the library. Placement of an Honors Program Center within the library **could provide an exceptional space** to showcase and celebrate cutting edge pedagogy and commitment to academic excellence.

[2] **Actively engage the leadership of Stockton’s Facilities team and Enrollment Management for recommendation and advocacy concerning space allocation for honors.** My interviews with the leadership in both areas reflected an admiration for honors and a recognition of the potential value it holds for student recruitment and retention as well as generating outcomes to enhance overall positive public relations of Stockton with multiple external stakeholders.

11) VISIBILITY - “Effort must be expended to make the Honors Program far more visible and readily identifiable on the Stockton campus” (Lanier, 21).

- While steps have been made which merit commendation since the past review, the program still lacks visibility.
- The visibility void results from both a lack of a central and identifiable space for an Honors Program--vs. a standalone Honors seminar room.
- The visibility void also relates to the lack of recognition from the senior administration. The students expressed concern and disappointment that senior administrators do not appear to recognize/value the honors program or the dedication put forwards by students in the honors program. Again, this reflects a missed opportunity by the institution.
- Honors lacks representation on any university committees or administrative ad-hoc committees or tasks forces. Even within the current umbrella of General Education, the Honors Director does not regularly receive invitations to College-level meetings of program directors reporting to that Dean.
- Students are not recognized at commencement ceremonies.

OPPORTUNITIES/RECOMMENDATIONS:

- A) – RECOMMENDATION: **Continue the excellent work of branding and innovation** as indicated by the activities listed under program strengths.
- B) – RECOMMENDATION: **Seek as many collaborative opportunities as possible** as they tend to generate more “press” coverage. This in turn helps get the work of honors noted by the administration.
- C) – RECOMMENDATION: **Have students consider creating and publishing a monthly or quarterly newsletter.** NCHC annually hosts a contest for best print and best electronic newsletters so a variety of models exist. It should be professional vs. interpersonal in focus and be distributed to current members but written with an eye to an external community that includes Stockton administrators, alumni, and prospective students.
- D) - RECOMMENDATION: **Provide** students **graduating with honors public recognition at Commencement Ceremonies.** This should include a demarcation in the Commencement program (some sort of *, #, or other symbol by their name) and a symbolic representation of honors they can wear (e.g., chord, stole, medallion, etc.).
- E) – RECOMMENDATION: **Create**, with support of senior administration, **an Honors Program Dean’s List or Honors Program Provost’s List**, that celebrates the academic achievement of honors students each grading period.
- [1] - The base level needed to attain this honor is a minimum 3.75, placing it at the base line threshold to graduate with Latin Honors.
- [2] – Notify students with a letter and Certificate signed by the Director of Honors and their Direct Report – ideally the Provost.
- F) - RECOMMENDATION: Explore opportunities for the **Honors Council** to **gain recognition as a standing committee of the Faculty Senate.** That body has rules for faculty representation on its committees which could help assure that the contributions and concerns of honors has a recognized representative voice in university governance.
- G) – RECOMMENDATION: Similarly, to #11-F, once the **student E-Board gains official status as a campus recognized organization**; student leadership should actively explore attaining a seat for Honors representation on Student Government.
- H) - RECOMMENDATION: **Create and host a couple of signature campus events**, distinctly “Honors” so the campus community will think of Honors when they think of the event.

Examples:

- [1] – **Outstanding Faculty identification and reception** –
- a. Have students anonymously nominate a faculty member who they found particularly engaging. In addition to the professor’s name and department, the student making the nomination should provide a couple of sentences as to WHY professor X is outstanding.
 - b. Collect the nominations in the fall before Thanksgiving and in spring before spring break.
 - c. Send a letter to each professor nominated, on **Honors Program stationary**, congratulating them on being nominated by a student for outstanding teaching and copying with the students’ testimony (but NOT their name!!!!).
 - d. The letter should be signed by the Director of Honors and the Co-Directors of the Honors Student Organization.
 - e. A copy of the letter should go to the faculty member’s Department Coordinator/Chair/Director, and the faculty member’s Dean.

- f. Fall letters should be sent right after Thanksgiving and before finals week. Spring letters should be sent right after Spring Break.
 - g. Host a late spring celebration event, inviting all faculty who were nominated. Have a program that lists all their names. Invite the President and/or Provost to come to the reception and say a word of congratulations. Have brief welcome/remarks by the Honors Director and student leadership. Have an honors student(s) provide some soft background music.
- [2] – **Outstanding Advisor identification and reception** – this is the same as above, but it focuses on ADVISING support. Get students to celebrate their go-to-faculty for advice, guidance, advocacy. Who do they get to write them letters of recommendation? Who helps get them internships? Champions them for scholarships or academic prizes? Opens doors with alumni and/or community leaders?
- [3] – **Graduate School Fair**
- a. Secure a large space (ball rooms in student union/field house) appropriate for placement of tables placed in rows “exhibition style” and ample room for students to walk between them.
 - b. Have a student committee that reaches out to area colleges/universities/professional schools to get representatives of their admissions offices to come to Stockton on say Wednesday from 10:00-2:00.
 - c. It is customary for any school attending to pay a registration fee of around \$100-\$150. Reps are assigned a table where they set out a display, which they bring with them, and then interact with anyone who stops by to look.
 - d. You 100% want a complimentary coffee service. Ideally you also provide a lunch option. The BEST option - give them a voucher (it will likely run you about \$6-\$8) for use in your cafeteria or food court.
 - e. Stockton Honors students help school reps set up and take down displays, assist in carrying displays to and from the reps’ car, advertise & promote the event, circulate as hospitality staff, design-distribute-collect-assess and evaluation instrument provided to each rep. Open to the full campus, this event is a win/win.

12) HONORS as RESEARCH and DEVELOPMENT – “The Honors Program at Stockton needs to establish its position as the “Research and Development” wing of the institution” (Lanier, 22).

- Students report appreciation when they have had a chance to collaborate with a professor in a research project but expressed difficulty in finding projects and an awkwardness in approaching faculty as it might seem forward/inappropriate.
- The faculty expressed a desire to “experiment” and develop alternative pedagogical approaches, such as contract grading and case study exploration in tandem with community-based organizations.

A) RECOMMENDATION: **Hold workshops to educate faculty about research opportunities through NCHC.**

- B) RECOMMENDATION: **Create an Undergraduate Student Research Program** – pair sophomore/junior level students with a faculty mentor.
1. Make a call to faculty who are willing to take on an undergraduate honors student to assist with their research. Interested faculty should indicate:
 - a. Nature of the project.
 - b. Any special skill sets (e.g., experience with SPSS, fluency in Spanish, ability to swim).
 - c. What the student can expect to learn and/or grow from the experience.
 2. Students review projects and reach out to professors they want to work with.
 3. Professors conduct interviews and select their research assistant.
 4. Commitments for both parties.
 - a. Students commit to dedicate and document a minimum of 30 hours in a given semester to the project.
 - b. Faculty communicate a statement of expectations and protocol for work to be done.
 - c. Faculty agree to credit the student in any public presentation or publication that the semester's work helps produce.
 - d. Faculty agrees to submit an evaluation of the students' performance and will offer to write the student a letter of commendation.
 - e. At least once during the semester, the faculty member takes the research assistant to lunch or dinner.
 5. Honors hosts a celebration event (punch/cookies) where students share their experience and both students and their mentor/advisor receive a certificate of participation.

13) ALUMNI DEVELOPMENT

- Virtually no indication of alumni engagement, beyond some faculty who were students in the program occurs.
- The Honors Program does not have a working relationship with Alumni Affairs.
- A one person Director cannot run an active program the size of Stockton's and try to balance the clerical work of building an alumni data base let alone provide time to cultivate alumni and provide the attentiveness necessary to build an alumni chapter for honors.

OPPORTUNITIES/RECOMMENDATIONS:

- A) OPPORTUNITY - "Institutional Advancement and Alumni Relations should give consideration to targeting the alumni of the Honors Program as a special population to support Honors initiatives." (Lanier 23-8).
- B) OPPORTUNITY – At the end of the spring 2022 term, honors was able to establish an Honors account in the Development office.
- C) OPPORTUNITY – A donation portal recently appeared on the Honors Program website.
- D) RECOMMENDATION – **Maximize these opportunities by:**
 1. Have a **full-time clerical support position** with some of the time dedicated to alumni record keeping.

2. If **an Assistant Director** is appointed, based on skill set, the Director can focus on alumni and delegate other responsibilities, or the AD can be tasked with alumni.
 3. **Create a student alumni director** as part of the Honors Student Association. H.S.A. can hold an alumni vocational or an alumni life advice panel once each semester to enable alumni to come to campus and interact with current students.
 4. If support from D #1/#2 **collaborate with the Alumni Office for a strategic planning session** to see where mutual benefits can occur.
- E) RECOMMENDATION – When you **begin** to give **serious focus to alumni development**, do not start with fund-raising appeals. **Go for friend-raising**. Celebrating alumni and finding non-financial commitment service they can provide to honors would build a foundation for eventual fund-raising.

14) External Assessment

- Funding for honors related speakers is not allocated in the current honors operating budget.
- Attempts to reach out through university funds, e.g., Compass Funds (<https://stockton.edu/strategic-planning/compass-fund.html>) have failed to gain support.
- Any program improves from outside perspectives when given by those who want the program to succeed. To this end, an honors program at any institution benefits tremendously from external assessment. The 2015 review recommended:
 1. At least once per academic year, experts in Honors curriculum or pedagogy or assessment or the like should be brought to the Stockton campus to offer faculty development workshops in Honors active learning or other Honors activities (Lanier 23 – 6).
 2. At least one NCHC-Recommended Site Visitor should be brought back to campus in 2 years to monitor progress and provide assistance and a second pair of eyes for the Honors Director.” (Lanier 23 – 9).

Neither of these recommendations were followed. Indeed, there has been no “external eye” on Stockton honors for 8 years.

- The lack of external support for honors provides further indication of a lack of support from the institution’s upper-administration. This represents a major missed opportunity.

OPPORTUNITIES/RECOMMENDATIONS

- A) OPPORTUNITY – Honors enjoys a positive relationship with Service Learning (SL) and Residence Life (RL). It appears many programmatic interests, particularly in leadership development, program building, and civic engagement overlap.
- B) RECOMMENDATION – **Collaborate with like-minded campus partners, specifically SL and RL to pool funds for assessment support**.
- C) OPPORTUNITY – Honors enjoys a positive relationship with the Assessment Office. Honors could provide a low-cost investment for “case study” that could then be applied to other academic units.
- D) RECOMMENDATION – **Reach out to the Director of Assessment and explore collaborative projects** that might produce some honorarium funds to support external consultation.
- E) RECOMMENDATION – **Personal Offer – I would be open to coming to Stockton at a mutually agreeable time in the fall, once the new senior administration is in place, to review this report**

and provide any guidance that may be appropriate to help put some of these recommendations into action.

Rubrics for Honors Evaluation and Benchmarking Criteria as Applied to the Honors Program

at Stockton University

The program review instrument was developed by the National Collegiate Honors Council [NCHC] Assessment and Evaluation Committee to be used by NCHC trained program reviewers. NCHC recognizes the diversity of honors experiences across the many institutions of higher learning – that programs may differ in their structure and delivery of honors education because of the culture of the university or college of which they are a part – and hence it does not expect an honors program or college to include all the items listed below. This instrument uses a 4-point scale of Mature, Proficient, Developing, and Undeveloped as a way of qualification.

Section 1 - Honors Mission, Strategic Plan, and Assessment

1.1 The program has a mission statement or charter document that includes the objectives of honors.

Finding: Developing. Although the Mission Statement provided in the self-study reflects a laudable commitment towards typical Honors levels of challenge and engagement, I could not discern what makes Honors at Stockton unique or enticing. I am impressed with their focus on Community Engagement and encourage further exploration in this area. I also see great collaborative potential with the Stockton Center for Community Engagement and its Director, Dr. Awilda Colon. In my interview with her, Dr. Colon expressed genuine openness to partnerships with the Honors Program and admiration for both the current director and students. Once identified, the specific focus for Honors should be prominently reflected in the mission statement.

1.2 The honors mission statement is consistent with the institution's mission. Finding: Developing.

There is a clear understanding from the Honors Director and Council that the mission statement for honors should demonstrate a direct link to Stockton's mission statement. The institution has experienced a rather revolving door of Provosts, each understandably with unique priorities. I see room for optimism as new senior leadership within the offices of the President and Provost take shape in fall 2023.

1.3 The program has a strategic plan, approved by the institution if appropriate, that guides resource allocation.

Finding: Developing (+). A good deal of both the resource of time, and funds from the meager operating budget, supports co-curricular student engagement that aligns in both community building and service to others. The Honors Program holds an expectation for students to conduct and report on 10 hours of community service, participate in a minimum of two dialogue and reflection sessions related to their service and participation in a minimum of 2 "Honors Events" each semester. Evidence suggests most students far exceed the numbers. Of note, the student E-Board is tasked in planning most special events and expressed frustration in student attendance. Some ways to reinforce the partnership between Co-Curricular and Curricular include: a) Encourage faculty to promote/advertise special events in class; b) Encourage faculty to link a reflection assignment or offer extra credit for students who attend; c) If a special event involves a speaker or program, dedicate 5-10 min. of the class immediately following the event to a reflection/assessment of the event by inviting one or more of the student planners of the event to come to the class to participate; d) Student leaders should seek ways to engage faculty in special events as presenters. Once more, as a

strategic plan is formulated and better overall financial support from the university becomes actualized, greater focus to long term planning will prove useful.

1.4 The program's strategic plan is periodically reviewed and revised. Finding: Developing. A thread of strategic planning that runs through the Annual Reports, which the Honors Director routinely submits to the Provost's Office. That office responds with interest in scheduling close-the-loop meetings to discuss the reports; regrettably, to date no such meetings have occurred. Again, I attribute a large component of this to the revolving Provost syndrome. Hopefully this will be resolved soon. Also, see below.

1.5 The program engages in continuous "closed-loop" assessment and evaluation. Finding: Undeveloped. The program has done this within its own confines of dialogue between the Honors Director and the Honors Council. Without senior level prioritization, I fear this will remain a losing battle; Stockton is losing out on a valuable resource.

1.6 Qualified peers regularly and periodically review the program. Finding: Proficient (+). The prior program review, as well as this most recent one, was done by professionals engaged in NCHC and followed NCHC-Recommended Program Review standards. To reach full potential, external consultants should be engaged, at a minimum, once every two years running between major reviews such as this.

1.7 The program is open to the need for change to maintain its distinctive position of offering exceptional and enhanced educational opportunities to honors students. Finding: Developing (+). The program has much to celebrate. Among its greatest strengths are the dedication and motivation of the director, honors council, and student leadership, to building a robust honors community that embraces an interdisciplinary curriculum supported by a living learning community and active co-curricular programming. To reach the next level necessitates high administrative commitment in personnel, space, and elevated governance/reporting structure, and the ethical commitment to give students the tools they need (e.g., priority scheduling) to enable them to achieve what is asked of them logistically in completing an academic program including honors designation.

Section 2 - Enrollment Management and Scholarships

2.1 The program has clear and effective recruitment strategies and practices. Finding: Undeveloped. The Honors program needs to be a central player in Stockton's recruitment strategies and practices. Honors could provide tremendous human capital service to the admissions process, but they need access to tools (a.k.a. designated scholarships and a budget to cover high practice curricular experiences) to attract and retain high ability students.

2.2 A clearly articulated set of admission criteria (e.g., GPA, test scores, a written essay, satisfactory progress, etc.) identifies the targeted student population served by the Honors program. Finding: Proficient. The admissions criteria are appropriate and widely published in electronic and paper form.

2.3 The program identifies enrollment management strategies aligned with institution's overall objectives. Finding: Developing (+). Honors clearly is one of the ways to attract and keep high-achieving students at Stockton (and New Jersey in general). There is a tremendous opportunity for collaboration. The Director of Enrollment Management and the director of Assessment see the value of honors to the overall institution and can become great collaboration partners. ***The Director simply needs time (which would happen with a full time AA and a ¼ time Assistant Director)*** to develop those relationships further.

2.4 The program clearly specifies retention and probation policies and requirements. Finding: Mature. The published retention and probation policies are clear, exact, and widely accessible.

2.5 The program clearly specifies the requirements needed for satisfactory completion. Finding: Mature. The published completion policies are clear, exact, and widely accessible.

2.6 When honors scholarships are available, the honors scholarship policies and processes promote student success and align with the enrollment management strategies. Finding: Not Applicable.

Currently, no Honors specific recruitment scholarships exist at Stockton. An opportunity exists however, as scholarships currently exist for high ability students---the caliber of student ideal for honors. This calls for a collaborative effort. The power of the scholarship to produce role models of engagement can occur if a requirement of 10 hours a week in campus service were added to the scholarship award. The 'give back' from these academically motivated students (helping with admissions, supporting research projects, serving peer mentors/academic tutors, etc.) could celebrate the link between scholarship and service.

2.7 When honors scholarships are available, the honors scholarship policies and processes align with Honors program scholarship and financial aid protocols. Finding: Not Applicable. As above.

2.8 When appropriate, two-year and four-year programs have articulation agreements by which honors graduates from two-year programs who meet previously agreed-upon requirements are accepted into four-year honors programs. Finding: Developing. There are agreements, but they are "not clearly articulated. The key issues are the recurring ones of equity and space. Equity, because it seems unfair to automatically admit students from Honors Programs at Mercer and Union colleges, no matter the quality of their applications, when we subject honors students from our local community institutions, such as Atlantic and Ocean County Colleges, to rigorous scrutiny." Consistency is clearly needed.

2.9 When applicable, articulation agreements are based on clearly delineated SLOs offering exceptional and enhanced educational opportunities to Honors students. Finding: Undeveloped. As above.

Section 3 - Administrative Structures

3.1 The place of honors in the administrative structure of the institution is appropriate to the mission and functions of the program. Finding: Developing (-). Given Stockton's historic commitment to broad and interdisciplinary General Education, the alignment of Honors with that effort is a testament to a true liberal arts education open to students in all majors. For an institution of Stockton's size and reputation, the Honors Director should report to the Provost, or at least an Associate Provost, as so many of the programs of Honors encompass those of the larger campus community. Honors merits a seat at the strategic planning table and can make tremendous contributions through student and faculty ambassadors for Stockton to the broader community. Moreover, due to the complexity of a truly university wide honors program, the Honors Director must be viewed as a career professional and not a revolving door. Three-year appointments for coordinators prohibit any person to *build* a program and fundamentally conflicts with the long-standing empirical evidence gathered by NCHC that Honors programs and colleges do best when administered by full-time administrative directors or deans who have relatively stable careers. A minimum of 7 to 10 should become the standard; indeed, some of the most established and funded programs have career directors. Note, this does not mean a guaranteed decade-plus appointment without performance review. The Honors Director should indeed demonstrate program learning outcomes. The current placement and structure of Honors at Stockton impedes its ability to maximize its potential to its students, faculty, and the institution.

3.2 The honors director reports to the chief academic officer of the institution. Finding: Developing (-). As stated above, the high impact academic program of an institution should report to the chief academic officer, the Provost. It is worth noting that the faculty and several of the division directors I had the opportunity to speak with identified this path as sound and desirable.

3.3 The honors program is a permanent, stable, and highly regarded academic unit that contributes to a lasting tradition of excellence. Finding: Proficient (qualified). Speaking with students, faculty and campus program directors, the answer is a strong illustration of proficiency. The Associate Provost I spoke with, while new to the institution, comes with fantastic direct knowledge from first-hand experience teaching and

developing honors curriculum at a prior institution. Sadly, the expected meeting a five-year review would have under NCHC standards would include conversation with the President and Provost; I had neither. Again, given current changes in top administration, this is understandable. However, the briefing the Provost gave to the new Associate Provost did not reflect much awareness of what value honors education had for the institution, and that is truly a situation that must be addressed. Furthermore, the high regard from individuals below senior administration has not translated into institutional investments in space or visibility that will provide the foundation in creating a lasting tradition of excellence.

Section 4 - Curriculum

4.1 The program offers carefully designed educational experiences that meet the needs and abilities of the undergraduate students it serves. Finding: Developing (+). The Honors classes at Stockton are enjoyed and appreciated by students and faculty. The students indicated a high value of honors classes is the emphasis on critical thinking over memorization and subsequent regurgitation. The materials I received in preparing for my opportunities to speak directly with members of the Honors Community further support these observations. Many students reported that they had few to no opportunities for Honors learning as they neared the end of their time at Stockton. Others shared that students tend to drop the program due to scheduling conflicts. The program should give serious consideration to offering multiple sections of four to five key courses, akin to HON 1033, that are spread across a student's first four semesters on campus. The courses should enable students to double dip on graduation requirements. The addition of a capstone course adds tremendously to a cohesive academic program.

4.2 The honors curriculum purposefully aligns with and enhances the mission of the honors program. Finding: Developing. The emphasis on interdisciplinary approaches, done in collaborative groups of intellectually diverse individuals, coupled with dedication to Service Learning, gives the program a focal point, but that focal point is not repeated in all classes. Linked with assessment, the Honors Director and Honors Council should create at least three Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs). These three concepts should appear on the syllabus for every honors course.

4.3 The curricular design leads to a mastery of identified learning outcomes. Finding: Undeveloped. As discussed above, there are no specific learning outcomes for Honors at Stockton. The Essential Learning Outcomes, which are widely in vogue at the institution, and which focus the General Education (as well as many other programs) are a place to start, but the development of outcomes that are specific to Honors learning and pedagogy is badly needed.

4.4 The pedagogic practices of the program are based on clearly identified learning outcomes. Finding: Undeveloped. As above.

4.5 The honors program exercises considerable control over the honors curriculum. Finding: Both Proficient and Developing. Given the very strong tradition of faculty governance that is recognizably reflected in the involvement and commitment of the Honors Faculty Advisory Board, Honors does indeed exercise considerable control of the design of its curriculum, which is highly commendable. Conversely, the lack of funding earmarked for the support of Honors teaching and other administrative difficulties place Honors in the position of being completely at the mercy of other entities to deliver the curriculum. At most institutions, the Honors Director or Dean has the final and exclusive say over the choices that lead to the delivery of Honors classes (times, locations, faculty, etc.). In the report, I offered several collaborative steps between Honors and the various departments who provide faculty to teach in the program. Ultimately, however, such control over scheduling logistics must come from the Provost.

4.6 The program offers specialized active learning courses, seminars, and colloquia. Finding: Proficient but opportunity exists for enhancement. Both the faculty and students involved in Honors reported lots of interaction and energy in their teaching and learning. Clearly, the close interaction and small class size are

points for celebration. When asked what makes Honors classes at Stockton different from non-Honors classes, the common responses included: small classes, a chance to really get to know the other students in the class, interdisciplinary, and lots of discussion. One of my favorite responses came from a STEM student who said, "I love my honors classes because they challenge me and give me the chance to actually think." She went on to share that so many of her classes focus on the need to memorize theories, facts, and concepts. She clearly recognized the need and value of such knowledge, but she enjoyed honors courses because they "let you look at the big picture". Another student talked about in class debates which really engaged students and forced them to see the value in "the other side" of an issue. With some additional financial support for honoraria for guest speakers, field trips, site visits, and alumni outreach (to mention just a few) the amazingly creative faculty at Stockton can take what they do to an even higher level.

4.7 The program offers class-based experiential learning opportunities. Finding: both Proficient and Developing. I encourage more intentional focus on the implementation of and reflection on service-learning experiences for as many honors designated courses as possible. Another valuable area for further growth and exploration will come from championing collaborative faculty/student research. As mentioned in the report, this can be a tremendous win/win for both parties. Faculty get some assistance from academically motivated students and can attain this support using the Honors Program as a "match maker" which takes the awkwardness out of faculty directly approaching students or visa/versa. Students will clearly benefit from the mentoring.

4.8 The program offers undergraduate research or other independent-study options. Finding: Undeveloped. As above.

4.9 The program promotes internships, service learning, and field experiences when appropriate. Finding: Developing. As above.

4.10 The program requirements constitute a substantial portion of the participants' undergraduate work. Finding: Developing. Typically, across the land, Honors students complete 20 to 25% of their studies within an Honors context; presently that percentage is 18.75 for students entering as freshmen or juniors and 16.6% for those entering as sophomores. Increasing the requirement number is ideal if scheduling will allow.

4.11 The curriculum is designed so that honors requirements can, when appropriate, also satisfy general education requirements, major or disciplinary requirements, and pre-professional or professional training requirements. Finding: Developing. As above, the overlap with General Education is quite good, but in the other areas the overlap is insufficient or lacking, even in capstone area where the "presentation" aspect seems limited.

4.12 The program provides a distinctive learning environment for selected students, providing opportunities for measurably broader, deeper, and more complex learning-centered and learner-directed opportunities than may be typically available at the institution--all appropriately tailored to the institution's mission and culture. Finding: Developing (+) – Stockton has chosen to focus on broader vs. deeper and that is fine. It may merit opportunities, specifically for those programs which argue they cannot participate in the GEN ED basis of the program due to the credits needed for their majors, to explore an Honors Certificate Program, linked more directly to those majors which would allow those students to focus on the "deep" aspect of honors. I offer this with major caution however because such a move will enhance "silo" education (all the business students never interact with those in education or nursing, etc.). A major strength of Stockton's interdisciplinary emphasis enables it to function as a truly university wide program, which holds much greater promise for growth and support. The concept of complex learning can reach fruition through either breadth or depth. The students' comment about honors giving them opportunities to think illustrates how Stockton honors excels.

Section 5 - Infrastructure

5.1 The program is allocated an annual budget that adequately supports the mission of the program.

Finding: Undeveloped. The entire Honors budget at Stockton to support the delivery of a complex and intricate academic program consists of five courses of teaching release for one faculty member per academic year, two courses of compensation for summer program activities, a part-time assistant to the Honors Program whose primary job responsibilities are in the Academic Advising Office and an operating budget that was decreased from 2015 (which was insufficient) with \$23,000 to \$14,000. There are Community Colleges with greater support. For a comparison with a four-year regional comprehensive, the Honors budget at WCU supports a half-time administrative Director (fall-spring-summer) who teaches two honors courses (fall-spring), a quarter-time Assistant Director (fall-spring-summer) who teaches three honors courses each semester (fall-spring), two tenure track and one full-time temporary who each teach four honors courses (fall-spring) and funding to cover instructional costs for 9-16 faculty campus wide to cover the instruction of both required and special topics classes (departments receive the cost to hire a temporary faculty member to cover a course to replace the home department faculty member teaching in honors), a full-time Administrative Assistant, two graduate student lines, and access to student work study students, in addition to a yearly operating budget of nearly \$100,000. And beyond that there are the funds that support Honors scholarships and funds that come from the named Honors endowment accounts.

One of the greatest shocks I discovered, with respect to finances, was the absolute neglect of support to Dr. Duntley's home programs, CRIM and MACJ, received no financial remuneration to help cover courses he would normally teach. No department should face economic hardship by having a member of their department functioning in the leadership of a university wide program like honors. This indifference to the CRIM and MACJ Programs is truly unprecedented and a sure way to build animosity between colleagues and thwart any incentive a department would ever have in encouraging faculty to associate with honors. From an ethical perspective, the Director's home department must receive some level of compensation. Further, the faculty member who serves as Director of Honors, while getting reassignment for administration of honors should assume no obligations for teaching, advising, or other service to their home department. The Director's teaching and service now belong to the Honors Program. Any necessary budgeting to make this a reality is critically important.

5.2 The program is allocated personnel resources that adequately support the mission of the program.

Finding: Undeveloped. As above. The need for a full-time Administrative Assistant is ESSENTIAL! The appointment of a half- or even quarter-time Assistant Director should be a priority.

5.3 The program is allocated space for honors support staff, faculty, and administrative functions as appropriate.

Finding: Undeveloped. In practice, there is no administrative space allocated for Honors on the Stockton campus at present. The space reallocations promised for Fall of 2017 gave some hope but was unrealized. I elaborate on the space needs in the report. My interview with the facilities/space management team was most promising, they simply need permission from above.

5.4 The program is allocated space for honors student functions as appropriate that may include areas for an honors lounge, library, reading rooms, computer facilities, or other student-related needs.

Finding: Underdeveloped – see above. While there is a designated "Honors Center" its location is nowhere near the Director (or an AA when Stockton eventually gets one), and its functionality is limited for an honors program that enrolls some 200+ students.

5.5 The program is allocated suitable, preferably prominent, space on campus that provides both access for the students and a focal point for honors activity.

Finding: Developing VERY slowly. They did get signage and a bulletin board outside of the door, but it drastically lacks the recruitment potential or "wow factor" for potential students and their parents. The space used by the students and referred to the Honors

Center (F244) houses some computers and a good printer, but it is very cramped and much too small for the number of students who shoehorn themselves into the room. There is also one small seminar room (L114) used by Honors on a regular basis. Neither space can be considered “prominent” or even enticing, which goes quite retrograde to the need for Honors space to signal the focal point or “pride of place” that characterizes Honors elsewhere. Upgrades are needed and long overdue.

5.6 If the honors program has a significant residential component, honors housing is designed to meet the academic and social needs of honors students. Finding: Mature. Both the current students and the alumni raved about the Honors living space in Building D, and that space clearly does a great, great deal to infuse the program with the vital community of students that is the heart of any solid Honors program. I offered multiple suggestions on developing this robust relationship between honors and residence life even further.

5.7 The distinction achieved by the completion of the honors requirements is publicly announced and recorded. Finding: Proficient. Upon completion of Honors requirements, the phrase Certificate of Distinction in Honors is added to the student’s transcript. Honors students should gain recognition at commencement with some visible symbol (chord, stole, medallion, insignia, etc.) as well as designation in the commencement program booklet. Doing so will enhance program visibility.

Section 6 - Faculty Governance

6.1 The program has a standing committee or council of faculty members that is governed by a charter, constitution, or similar document. Finding: Proficient – The recent creation of a faculty handbook demonstrates excellent progress from the 2015 report.

6.2 The standing committee works in concert with the honors director or other administrative officer(s) and is involved in honors curriculum, governance, policy, development, and evaluation deliberations. Finding: Mature. The Honors Advisory Board is very involved with the operations of the Honors program and gives a great deal of support to the Honors Director and to Honors students. I was truly impressed by their level of passion for the program. It merits note that students also have a voice with the Advisory Board which is tremendous. This could grow even further by inviting select strategic partners (enrollment management, service learning, residence life) to provide members as they could help brainstorm additional collaborative resources.

6.3 The selection of committee members appropriately corresponds to the institution’s principles of faculty governance. Finding: Developing. During the last Honors Director contract negotiations about two years ago, the administration dictated that a Stockton Administrator be added to our Honors Council. Thus, Dean Gregg, the direct report of the honors director was added. The Honors Council is not recognized as a standing committee of the Faculty Senate. The broader university appears inconsistent concerning faculty representation on university committees.

6.4 The composition of the committee represents the colleges and/or departments served by the program and elicits support for the program from across the campus. Finding: Proficient. The academic diversity of the Honors Advisory Board is most impressive. The student membership seems heavy in STEM and in women (a point to celebrate!). I was surprised to see little in the way of Education majors or ones in the humanities (History, English, Languages, Philosophy, etc.). Drawing in professional programs and building participation from international students (if the Honors Certificate Program gains traction) could further diversify the academic range, which is already strong.

6.5 The composition of the committee includes honors student membership(s). Finding: Mature. Three members of the Honors Executive Committee are ex officio members of the Honors Advisory Board.

6.6 The honors program exercises considerable control over the selection of Honors faculty and the scheduling of Honors courses. Finding: Undeveloped. In practice, the Honors Director gratefully accepts “the support of interested faculty, and it is highly dependent on ‘on the good will and energy of particular faculty

members.” A less charitable characterization is that the Honors Director has no real control over the selection of Honors faculty or the scheduling of Honors courses. It is true that support for Honors is somewhat traditional at Stockton and in that aspect might be relied upon, but in the end good will can only go so far, especially when times get tough, and money gets tight. This is a crucial weakness that must be redressed.

6.7 The criteria for selection of honors faculty include exceptional teaching skills, the ability to provide intellectual leadership and mentoring for able students, and support for the mission of honors education

Finding: Undeveloped. As the above suggests, there is no method for selecting (or developing) Honors faculty to be certain that classroom practices are consistent with the program’s overall goals. This weakness puts the development of new, young faculty at significant risk, especially when more seasoned faculty look towards retirement.

Section 7 - Student Services and Co-Curricular Program

7.1 Honors students receive honors-related academic advising from qualified faculty and/or staff.

Finding: Developing. The Director’s door (although it is departmental office and NOT the designated honors program office) is always open and he dedicates enormous time and energy (as university testified to by students and faculty). The members of the Honors Advisory Board are well informed and, especially those who actively teach in honors, have obvious mentorship relationships with some students. A staff member in the advising center, Rich Trama, is a dynamic and energetic supporter of the program. Ultimately, the level of advising support is too low. I made several recommendations in the report (e.g., creating advisement sheets specific to each major, identifying a faculty liaison within each department to serve as a mentor for that major, creating a leadership position for peer mentoring within the student organization. Here is where a designated assistant director, to coordinate these activities, would prove tremendous value.

7.2 The program offers extracurricular activities that purposefully enhance the honors curriculum.

Finding: Developing. There are some extracurricular Honors activities that are apparent on the Stockton campus, but not as many as are in evidence elsewhere. The reasons for this deficiency are readily apparent: 1) the Director simply cannot be expected to do EVERYTHING. There are just not enough hours in the day; 2) inadequate space where students can gather and have more logistical access to the Director and a full-time AA; 3) a limited budget to support “extras”.

7.3 There is a standing student-level committee or organization that is governed by a charter, constitution, or similar document.

Finding: Proficient. The constitution of the Honors Student E-Board is clear and well thought out. This said, for greater visibility (and hopefully another funding source) the current E-Board should explore a redefinition as a recognized campus student organization and become the Honors Student Association. The students all expressed frustration that “generating attendance is a constant challenge.” When I asked, well how often do you meet, the response was monthly. That is way too infrequent. Several are involved in the campus’ Circle K organization, and as they reflected on Circle K’s **weekly** meetings with different committees holding responsibility for planning the various meeting themes, I could see lightbulbs go on in their minds.

7.4 The student-level committee or organization has as much autonomy as possible but is assured a voice in the governance and direction of the honors program – i.e., directly advises the honors director/dean.

Finding: Proficient. The Honors Executive Board houses the positions of Student Director and Student Assistant Director; further, three members of the Honors Executive Board sit on the faculty-level Honors Advisory Board. What is lacking is a robust and engaged “general membership.” Enhancing the involvement and responsibility of student leaders is a fabulous win/win. They will rise to the challenge and hone their leadership skills in ways that might seem unimaginable.

7.5 The student-level committee or organization helps maintain excellence in the program through appropriate and focused activities. Finding: Proficient. In general, the sense of community and intellectual excitement is very high among the Honors students at Stockton. Clearly, the living-learning experience centered in residence hall D as well as the interactions in the classroom are high caliber.

7.6 The program provides priority enrollment for active honors students in recognition of scheduling difficulties caused by the need to satisfy both honors and major program(s) requirements. Finding: Underdeveloped: As mentioned in my report, from an ethical perspective, Stockton's administration owes honors students the ability to priority schedule. I realize this wording here is strong, but it matches the urgency of this need; it represents a step that will offer tremendous value with no financial cost. Priority scheduling should not be seen as a blank check, to receive priority scheduling honors students should have the clear expectations of: a) academic success as demonstrated by a minimum 3.3 cumulative GPA; b) documented hours of service each semester; c) evidence of enrolling and successfully completing honors courses from semester to semester. Stockton owes the students priority scheduling not because honors students are "privileged or entitled" it is to enable them to achieve the herculean task of meshing limited sections of honors courses with limited sections of major program requirements. Recruiting students to a program they cannot legitimately finish in four years is not appropriate. Priority scheduling is a critical tool students need to find academic success that initially drew them to Stockton. Furthermore, honors students are often poised for graduate/professional school. I was impressed how many honors students I talked to had double majors or multiple minors; how fantastic! They also shared fears that they might not have the ability to complete those goals "because they anticipate they won't be able to schedule the classes." Priority scheduling won't 100% guarantee full scheduling access, but it will make a tremendous stride.

7.7 The program promotes and supports participation in regional and national conferences, Honors Semesters, and international programs. Finding: Developing. As with 7.2, satisfying this best practice requires both personnel and funding resources. Although the Stockton Honors program has had the wherewithal to take students to the Northeast Regional Honors Council (NRHC), the program has not had the resources to allow even the Director to regularly attend the National Collegiate Honors Council meetings, something that nearly every established Honors program affords on a regular basis. The lack of accomplishment in this area is a direct consequence of the program's inadequate resources. NOTE: Funding for the Director to attend NCHC should not come from the Honors Program operating budget. This is professional development and represents Stockton on the national stage; funding should come from an administrative line item.

7.8 If the honors program has a significant residential component, the residential life functions are designed to meet the academic and social needs of honors students. Finding: Mature. As stated above, the sense of community and intellectual excitement that flows from residence D is very high. I hope conversation will take this learning-living community to the next level by: a) offering space for upper-class students to continue living in community; b) creating designated study space/lounges in the resident area; c) mandating all first year students must live for a year in designated honors housing AND having institutional funding to support those with demonstrated financial need; and d) exploring moving the designated honors housing to a more modern facility with more private vs. communal bath/toilet space and greater zone controlled heating and cooling.

Section 8 - Excellence and Innovation

8.1 The program provides a locus of visible and highly reputed activity across the campus. Finding: Developing. As was stated above, the general sense on the Stockton campus is that Honors offers a solid experience for its students, and that it has improved in many ways over the last four years. It is, nevertheless, nearly invisible on the Stockton campus. This results from a) lack of identified and impressive physical space;

b) lack of any external signage that signals an Honors Program exists; c) low level of reporting structure that limits the Honors Program's ability to integrate into more university visible programs/activities; d) lack of one or two "honors defined programs" – events such as an outstanding teacher reception or a campus wide Graduate/Professional School Fair that become Stockton traditions, traditions linked to honors.

Stockton Honors has made great strides recently through creating a formal logo. They have begun linking the branding to "swag" which will only continue. Offering every incoming honors student, a specially designed t-shirt which they are encouraged to wear on the first day of class, and encouraging faculty to do the same, affords tremendous advertising and community building potential. I look forward to seeing where this next develops.

8.2 The program exemplifies highly reputed standards and models of excellence for students and faculty across the campus. Finding: Proficient. All the pedagogic materials reviewed, as well as the testimony of faculty, students, staff, and administrators reflect high standards and a consistent focus on excellence.

8.3 The program serves as a laboratory within which faculty feel welcome to experiment with new subjects, approaches, and pedagogies. Finding: Undeveloped but Developing. Because of rotating directors, it becomes nearly impossible to create new curricular options, all the emphasis needs to be focused on making what exists work. By making the honors director a more recognized and celebrated position within the campus community, I can envision-----especially with THIS director and THIS Honors Advisory Board tremendous innovation. Evidence exists for innovation happening in Stockton's Honors Program through faculty from multiple disciplines collaborating in creating a unified first semester honors experience. Faculty discussed wanting to see honors become more of a pedagogical laboratory where practices such as contract grading, small group service-learning projects with community partners, and collaborations with programs that could take faculty and students to Washington DC, just to name a few, are actively percolating in faculty conversations.

8.4 Innovative efforts in curriculum and pedagogical design that were developed in honors become institutionalized across the campus. Finding: Undeveloped. As above.

See Attachments:

- 1) Advisement sheet – Biology – Cell & Molecular
- 2) Schedule plan – Biology – Cell & Molecular
- 3) Advisement sheet – Political Science
- 4) Schedule plan – Political Science